United Nations S/2016/713

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 August 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 15 August 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and to Security Council resolution 2284 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of UNOCI for a final period, until 30 June 2017, including a two-month period of mission closure, as recommended in my special report on UNOCI dated 31 March 2016 (S/2016/297). In that report, I indicated that, in addition to implementing a prioritized, substantive mandate until 30 April 2017, UNOCI would enhance its efforts, initiated in 2013 and detailed in my report of 24 December 2013 (S/2013/761), to take forward activities related to the transformation of the United Nations engagement in Côte d'Ivoire, including the transfer of priority tasks of UNOCI to the Government and to the United Nations country team.

Côte d'Ivoire has made considerable progress towards lasting peace, security and political stability since UNOCI was established in April 2004, particularly in the years since the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis. The timely decision to close UNOCI reflects the view of the Council that the situation in the country no longer presents a threat to international peace and security. However, continued efforts must be made by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of its partners, to address the remaining fragilities that contributed to conflict in order to consolidate the hard-won peace and stability in the country. More remains to be done with respect to promoting social cohesion, mitigating the risks of local-level conflict and addressing economic inequality, particularly in the west of the country. While important work has been done to put in place policies and reforms aimed at enhancing the national institutional capacity to protect human rights, ensuring the rule of law and expanding access to justice and security services, implementation remains incomplete. Meanwhile, integrating former combatants into civilian society remains a challenge to the consolidation of peace, and there are residual humanitarian needs, particularly for internally displaced persons and refugees, who are still returning to the country. Despite improvements in the situation along the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border area, periodic violence over land conflicts and intercommunal disputes continues to create instability in the west, exacerbated by the distrust many communities feel towards the Ivorian armed forces.

In this context, the United Nations system in Côte d'Ivoire, in close consultation with the Government, is engaged in an integrated transition planning process in order to ensure a well-managed, responsible closure of UNOCI by 30 June 2017. The first step was to agree on priority areas of intervention that

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should be handed over to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations country team or other partners. The priorities areas are: national reconciliation and social cohesion; human rights and transitional justice; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; defence and security; law enforcement; and communication, specifically UNOCI FM radio. Once the priority areas for intervention were agreed, joint technical committees comprising representatives of the United Nations and the Government were established, each of which finalized detailed transition proposals, mapping the specific tasks and associated costs and identifying partners to assume each responsibility. Those proposals are being consolidated and, once approved by the Prime Minister, will inform discussions during a meeting of the partners of Côte d'Ivoire, to be convened on 15 September 2016 by the Government, with support from the United Nations. That meeting, which will include bilateral and multilateral partners, regional organizations and other partners, will provide an important opportunity for all partners to commit to advancing efforts centred on a shared vision of the remaining priorities for peace consolidation, following the withdrawal of UNOCI. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to identify opportunities and resources to close identified gaps.

Meanwhile, the United Nations system in Côte d'Ivoire is finalizing a transition plan aimed at supporting the transfer of the residual priority responsibilities of UNOCI to the Government and the United Nations country team, as well as other partners. That plan will be aligned with a proposed $50 million programme, sourced by the United Nations country team, which will support its continued engagement in peace consolidation activities after the closure of UNOCI. It will also take into account shared strategic priorities of the United Nations system in Côte d'Ivoire and existing planning frameworks such as the "One United Nations" programmatic framework and the national development plan for the period from 2016 to 2020.

One of the innovative approaches to ensure a responsible transition from peacekeeping will be an enhanced commitment to programmatic cooperation, as indicated in Security Council resolution 2284 (2016). UNOCI has identified opportunities for other actors within the United Nations system to meet responsibilities that fall within its mandate. To that end, the mission will enter into arrangements to finance such programmatic cooperation through its assessed contributions, while maintaining strong oversight and accountability controls to ensure the delivery of these mandated efforts before its closure. Areas falling within the UNOCI mandate in which programmatic cooperation with the United Nations country team will be enhanced include social cohesion and national reconciliation, disarmament, security sector reform, cross-border stabilization and human rights, with a focus on sexual and gender-based violence. Such cooperation has a number of advantages. First, it will facilitate the transition of residual tasks, while also enabling the scaling up of the activities of the United Nations country team prior to the closure of the mission. Secondly, this will enable UNOCI to divest itself of core infrastructure in order to ensure its closure by 30 June 2017.

In parallel, options are being explored with the Peacebuilding Fund to continue to support the activities of the United Nations system in Côte d'Ivoire. With an investment of $33.7 million since 2008, the Fund has been instrumental in addressing peacebuilding needs in Côte d'Ivoire and establishing systems of coordination and joint programming. Currently, the Fund is providing $12 million in

funding to sustain a range of peace consolidation activities, including conflict prevention, national reconciliation and social cohesion. Plans are also under way to develop a project aimed at bolstering social cohesion and confidence in security actors along the border with Liberia. Given the scarcity of funds for countries in transition, I hope that current efforts to recapitalize the Fund are successful, so that it can continue to be a reliable partner.

The international community, and the Security Council in particular, has made a considerable investment in Côte d'Ivoire through the deployment of the peacekeeping mission over the past 12 years. Securing that investment requires continuous support for the priorities identified above. With the closure of UNOCI on the horizon, it is critical that adequate resources be mobilized to fill the gaps identified in the overall effort to consolidate peace. While the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has demonstrated its willingness and capacity to provide leadership, it is essential that all partners mobilize around this collective effort to ensure that the transformation of the United Nations involvement in Côte d'Ivoire is a success.

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon